

***Isolated Childrens Parents Association***  
***East Coast Branch***  
***Tasmania***

- A) Rural families and students are burdened with many costs associated with secondary, college, TAFE & university education. Travel and accommodation making up the most costly components together with the ever increasing rise in fuel, electricity and food costs. Regional rural Australian families and students are forever fighting for the equal opportunities their city counterparts receive and enjoy but are heavily disadvantaged by these financial factors. If accommodation is not accessible then these expenses become increasingly greater. Rentals are expensive added to this is furniture, power, food, telephone/internet and travel costs. The Isolated Children's Allowance available to students in Grades 11 up is helpful but only if school boarding facilities are available. Students who do not fit this criteria (years 7 to 10) and live within the distance criteria but who wish to bypass their one and only regional school for a broader education experience, the financial burden is very costly. Many families relocate to cities leaving behind their elderly extended families, jobs, local primary schools loose younger siblings and rural Australia is slowly loosing many families leaving behind country towns with aging populations.
- B) Regional and city school/campuses need to work together to deliver courses that can be split into two components e.g If a course requires standard theory, this may be accessible online and can be done in a regional school class room. If the course requires a more practical side where supervision is essential this could be done on a city campus, mixing with other students and sharing ideas. This could reduce the students travel time, allow them more days in their home town and may also help with student retention.
- C) The expectations of the Government on students aged 18 years and up are excessive and will be exceptionally difficult on rural students. Many rural towns do not have MacDonaldis, Coles, Woolworths or Pizza Hut etc, which require many employees to cover working shifts. Many businesses in rural areas work 8.00 till 6.00 Monday to Friday with few businesses opened on weekends. There are very limited opportunities for students to acquire 30 hours per week!
- D) The short and long term impact of the proposed Government policies will be a greater number of students either dropping out of or forgoing further education, so much for a better educated Australia. Ensure that rural regional students accommodation is dealt with prior to metro at college accommodation campuses.
- E) There is a lack of understanding and ignorance in Government as to the provisions needed for rural and regional students education.
- i) Access to specialist teaching (PE, Lotus, Music, Art).
  - ii) Access to sport – declining numbers in regional areas making it more difficult to play team sports – travel distance together with cost involved to play other teams also a problem.
  - iii) Access to cultural events and places
  - iv) Access to a broader education
  - v) Life issues and experiences that larger city school students are exposed to..

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F) All of our above comments greatly effect our small rural communities. We need to retain our younger generation, how will these communities survive with out their support in the future. If the Government do not see the need to retain your families and students in regional rural areas they will be spending more and more on our health system as the elderly are literally being left behind.

- We need to retain our young families.
- We need our students to acquire good education and skills.
- We need accommodation and travel assistance so that families can achieve these requirements.
- We need to be able to bypass a school if it cannot deliver a whole educational experience.
- Committed teaches who want to live and work in our rural towns and be a part of the community is also vitally important to small rural towns.

If these needs are met our country towns may be able to look forward to a better future, unfortunately these requirements need to be addressed NOW. Our school numbers are drastically declining hard working families are leaving and our elderly population is growing fast, who is going to live here to look after them?